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INFORMATION REPORT

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Eleventh National Conference of the UGT

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REFERENCES

THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
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1. After postponement from an earlier date¹ the Eleventh National Conference of the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT) was held in Montevideo on 25-27 September 1953. The inaugural session at the Cine Avenida, calle San Martin 2483, was followed by five sessions of more limited attendance at calle Sierra 2039, Montevideo, headquarters of the UGT sector of the Sindicato Unico de la Aguja (Needle Workers' Union). The work of three special commissions formed by the conference to study in more detail the basic agenda of "unity" and political, financial, and farm labor problems had not been completed by 7 October.
2. Session of 25 September - This introductory session, lasting nearly four hours, was largely consumed by speeches serving to orient the conference, interpret its principal slogan, "Unity of the Workers," and boost morale. Javier LAROCCA, secretary-general of the Sindicato Unico de la Administracion Nacional de Puertos (SUANP - National Port Administration Union) was the first speaker. He was followed by Roberto MORENO, "fraternal delegate" from Brazil, leader of the Communist-controlled Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (CTAL - Latin American Labor Confederation); Marcos MEDINA, secretary-general of the PCU cell in the ANGLO packing plant in Fray Bentos, who spoke for workers in the interior of the country; and Giuseppe CASADEI, an Italian who brought greetings from the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) and a request for UGT attendance at the conference of the WFTU in Vienna.
3. Themes contained in these speeches covered, with varying degrees of thoroughness and intensity, virtually all aspects of current UGT and Uruguayan Communist Party (PCU) dogma. In his usual fiery manner LAROCCA attacked the government for its suppression of the illegal general strike of September 1952, and added a phrase to the effect that the fighting spirit of the Uruguayan worker is not dead - an implied threat of future hostile action. He concluded by pledging SUANP loyalty to the UGT. MORENO maintained that

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the Brazilian working class opposes the Vargas government of Brazil, and called for closer bonds between Uruguayan and Brazilian workers within the framework of the CTAL. CASADEI's speech was mainly concerned with the worldwide Communist struggle, and more specifically with the roles therein of the WFTU and the UGT.

4. The most significant speech of this first session was made by Enrique PASTORINO, secretary-general of the UGT. It covered three general areas - political, labor matters, and "auto-criticism." On the first two themes PASTORINO contributed nothing new. He maintained that the strong UGT and PCU stand against the military treaty with the United States had delayed its signing and has thus materially contributed to forestalling a future war. He called for a redirection of Uruguayan internal and foreign policy away from "disastrous capitalism" and all its entails. And he foresaw in the increased budget for the Ministry of Interior signs of greater police "harassment" of labor.
5. PASTORINO's auto-criticism informed the conference that the UGT had achieved only partial success for lack of properly organized committees on the factory or industry level. The urgent necessity of organizing the worker movement within the lines laid down by the UGT was underlined, and the "petty sporadic strikes which do not follow any basic plan and which serve only to weaken organized labor" were vigorously attacked.
6. In conclusion, PASTORINO called for the following programs:
 - (a) Support for the previously reported movement to obtain the necessary signatures and other prerequisites for the calling of a constituent assembly to bring about the reorientation of Uruguayan foreign and domestic policies.²
 - (b) Absolute compliance by affiliated unions with the orders and directives of the UGT.
 - (c) The sending of a large delegation to the Third Congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Vienna.³
7. Sessions of 26 and 27 September - The work of these more restricted sessions centered upon the practical and detailed implementation of the UGT unity effort. As such, the UGT objectives in particular industries and factories were reviewed, with emphasis on those missions which offered the UGT the greatest opportunity. In this context, special attention was paid to the following industries and worker groups: Montevideo municipal transportation, construction, metalurgical, port workers, and textiles.
8. In these later meetings the following UGT leaders played prominent roles: Jaime GERCHUNI Perez spoke on implementation of the campaign to improve organization on the factory and industry level, and on propaganda to achieve this end. Alfredo MERCADAL, vice-president of the Centro de Obreros Graficos, Papeleros and Cartoneros (Printing, Paper and Pasteboard Workers' Union) reviewed the UGT effort and future possibilities for a "worker-peasant alliance."⁴ Professor Jose Luis MASSERA spoke on joint action between the UGT and the Uruguayan Pro-Peace Movement, of which he is the leader.⁵ Other speakers of importance who also discussed UGT possibilities in their own industries were as follows: Ricardo SANGUINETTI, vice-president of the UGT, who treated the subject of finances, and Mario ACOSTA, leader of the Sindicato Unico de la Construcion (SUC - Construction Workers' Union) who spoke on the campaign for unity with special reference to this effort in his own union. The UGT position among metal workers, and particularly the unity effort, were discussed by Omar FERROU and Pedro TOLEDO. Pedro BAEZ, secretary-general of the Federacion de Obreros y Empleados Molineros Afines (FOEMYA - Federation of Mill Workers), and Salvador ESCOBAR, of the presently non-UGT AMDET bus workers' union, spoke on the prevailing situation within their own industries.

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9. At these sessions there was noteworthy participation by secondary leaders of several UGT unions, some of whom have been identified as follows:
N. CARGANO, of the UGT sector of the Sindicato Unico de la Aguja; Valeriano IBANEZ, of the coasting trade division of SUANP; Omar PEREYRA, possibly of the non-UGT dairy workers' union; Juan Carlos SOSA of the Montevideo branch of the SUC; and Felipe SANTANA, of the SUC in Paysandu; Mario SANCHEZ, port worker; S. NICOLE, of the wool washers' division of the Federacion de Obreros en Lana (FOL); Carlos LUSTINGER, of the UGT faction in the Union Obrera Textil; M. GOBERNA and M. MACHADO, both omnibus workers, the latter being with the Montevideo CUTSCA line; Pedro SANSOTE, a construction worker; Velia GADDA, of the Centro de Obreros Graficos, Papeleros y Cartoneros; Luis VILLAGRAN, of the Sindicato de Oficios Varios de Piriopolis, Rivera, Carmelo y San Javier; and Ventura SANCHEZ, a metal worker.
10. The Conference as a Whole - As foreseen, the conference did not introduce any significant changes in Communist policy or strategy. Instead, it served three other purposes. First, it stressed the effort to attain control or influence over a greater sector of Uruguayan labor; secondly, it reviewed the internal matters of finance, organization and discipline to facilitate attainment of the first purpose; and thirdly, it served as a propaganda instrument to underscore the effort to attract to the UGT various independent unions or those affiliated with other Uruguayan labor organizations. This latter purpose was considered of such importance that the date of the conference was postponed a week in order to persuade non-UGT unions to participate.
11. The 'non-UGT unions which were represented at the conference were as follows: Asociacion de Empleados del Instituto Jubilatorio y Anexos (AEIJA - Retirement Bureau Workers); Sindicato de Curtidores de Maronas (Tanners' Union of Maronas); Asociacion de Tripulantes de Hidrografia (Association of Hydrography Workers); Sindicato de Obreros de la Fabrica de Cemento Portland y Canteras de Verdun (Union of Cement and Quarry Workers of Verdun); Comité de Huelga de la Fabrica 'La Mundial' (Strike Committee of La Mundial Textile Plant); Sociedad de Resistencia de Peones de Barracas (Resistance Group of Wool Factory Workers); and the Sindicato Autonomo de Obreros del Portland de Sayago (Autonomous Union of Cement Workers of Sayago).
12. Apart from CASADEI and MORENO, other "fraternal delegates" were: Fernando LATORRE, an officer of the Communist-controlled Casa de Espana (Spanish Union) of Montevideo, who allegedly attended for Spanish groups in Uruguay and abroad; Hugo PINTOS, aka Efraim MOREL, a Paraguayan, who reiterated the Communist call for the liberty of the Paraguayan Communist, Obdulio BARTHE; Professor Jose Luis MASSERA, previously referred to; and Grecia CAMPISTROUS, recently returned from the Congreso Mundial de Mujeres (World Congress of Women) who attended for the Union Femenina del Uruguay (Women's Union of Uruguay) a PCU front.

1. ☐ Comment. The decision to postpone the UGT National Conference from 18-20 September to 25-27 September reportedly had its origin in the successful banquet given by the PCU and UGT in honor of Eugenio GOMEZ Carreno, PCU secretary-general, on 23 August ☐. On the basis of the relatively large non-Communist attendance at this banquet, the PCU and UGT leaders were encouraged to believe that, with more time, a larger non-UGT attendance at the National Convention could be obtained.

2. ☐ Comment. This as yet unimplemented effort to attain a "constituent assembly" refers to Chapter 3, Article 331, Section A of the Uruguayan Constitution ratified 16 December 1951, which provides that upon the written request of 10% of the registered voters requesting constitution reform, the question must be submitted to popular plebiscite.

3. Cf. ☐

4. ☐ Comment. This may refer to some future effort to incorporate into the UGT more directly the Communist agricultural and rural activities.

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5. Comment. MASSERA is also secretary-general of Section 20 of the PCU in Montevideo. This section is largely composed of young metal workers whom MASSERA assiduously instructs in Communist doctrine. There is a possibility that MASSERA is now devoting more of his time to PCU labor matters. Reportedly, he exerts considerable influence behind the scenes on the activities of the UGT, although, as an intellectual, he is not a member.

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